

Your details

Submission details

I am making this submission as

A resident in a bushfire-affected area

Submission type

I am making a personal submission

Consent to make submission public

I would like this submission to remain anonymous

Share your experience or tell your story

Your story

My home in Killabakh NSW was completely destroyed in the Rumba Dump Complex fire on Tuesday 12th Nov 2019 approx 2PM. I believe this was due to a lack of fire fighting resources, co-ordination and professional emergency management locally.

As I have already provided a statement to Police as part of Strike Force Viridian on my experience, issues and suggestions I will upload that document to respond to your Inquiry as having to revisit this traumatic time is difficult at present. I have blacked out details that are irrelevant to your Inquiry.

Terms of Reference (optional)

The Inquiry welcomes submissions that address the particular matters identified in its [Terms of Reference](#).

1.1 Causes and contributing factors

See attached document

1.2 Preparation and planning

See attached document

1.3 Response to bushfires

See attached document

1.4 Any other matters

See attached document

Supporting documents or images

Attach files

- Nov2019 Rumba Dump Fire_Police Statement LBoylan.pdf



NSW Police Force

STRIKE FORCE VIRIDIAN
MANNING GREAT LAKES POLICE DISTRICT BUSHFIRES

Damaged Property Questionnaire

Rumba dump fire

A. PROPERTY DETAILS

ADDRESS	[REDACTED]
BUILDING DESCRIPTION (TWO STOREY, BRICK VENEER ETC)	Steel framed two bedroom house, western red cedar cladding with steel roof.
HABITATION STATUS (OWNER OCCUPIED, RENTED ETC)	Owner occupied
BUSHLAND FORMING ANY PART OF PROPERTY BOUNDARY?	Comboyne Road on one side and the other three bushland and farmland.

B. DETAILS OF OCCUPANTS

PERMANENT OCCUPANT AT TIME OF FIRE	NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	PHONE NO	ADDRESS (IF DIFFERENT FROM ABOVE)
OCCUPANT 1	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
OCCUPANT 2				
OCCUPANT 3				
OCCUPANT 4				
OCCUPANT 5				
OCCUPANT 6				

C. LAST / FIRST PERSONS ON PREMISES (IF UNOCCUPIED OR EVACUATED)

LAST PERSON ON PREMISES PRIOR TO FIRE (TIME & DATE)	██████████ 12/11/19 approx 11.30am
FIRST PERSON TO RETURN TO PREMISES (TIME & DATE)	██████████ 13/11/19 6.15am

D. INSURANCE DETAILS

PROPERTY INSURED?	Yes
INSURANCE COMPANY	██████████
TYPE OF INSURANCE (HOME AND CONTENTS ETC)	██████████
HOME \$	██████████
CONTENTS \$	██████████
CLAIM MADE	Yes

E. FIRE FIGHTING ACTIVITIES AND CAPABILITIES

DOCUMENTED BUSH FIRE SURVIVAL PLAN?	Yes.
DID ANY PERSON FIGHT THE FIRE – WHO?	No.
FIGHTING EQUIPMENT ON PROPERTY	Yes, firefighting pump attached to water tank and large fire hose connected, pump primed.

INDEPENDENT WATER SOURCE (e.g. DAM, RIVER ACCESS)	Yes, two large concrete tanks which were full, Killabakh RFS aware of this.
ASSISTED BY RFS?	No. House checked for occupation. I had a sign on the door to say I had evacuated. At that time no fire at my house but next door had a fire. RFS busy with persons who did not evacuate.

F. PROPERTY DAMAGE

LEVEL OF DAMAGE (DAMAGED OR DESTROYED)	Destroyed
DATE OF DAMAGE / DESTRUCTION	12/11/2019
IF NOT DESTROYED, BRIEF DETAILS OF DAMAGE	
BELIEVED CAUSE OF FIRE (DIRECT FLAME CONTACT, EMBER ATTACK ETC)	From RFS it was ember attack.
ANY PETS / LIVESTOCK LOST? DETAILS:	No.

G. COMMENTS

WERE THERE ANY CONCERNS ABOUT THE FIRE OPERATIONS AND SERVICES PROVIDED BY RFS/FIRE AND RESCUE NSW/ NSW POLICE?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of RFS resources at Killabakh to fight four known and active fire fronts. Fire control removed SA strike teams (4 units on Monday evening 11/11 although fire fronts still active) I believe if strike teams remained my house would have been saved. 2. Fire control had no contingencies in place if as expected the fire fronts escalated on the 12/11/19. RFS released fire prediction map to their general website at 9.15pm on 11/11/ not to residents in the path of the fire. Killabakh people relied on their own facebook site to come across this and distribute.
--	---

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. State of emergency declared on 9/11/19 yet a) police not requested to assist with orderly evacuations on Tuesday morning so that RFS could fight fires and not worry about evacuations. B) Mid coast council water trucks were not assisting the fire units early on Tuesday morning when water was very scarce due to drought. 4. No consideration by fire control on the age (most older than 65 years, skill base, experience or hours on fire ground of Killabakh RFS or experience of the captain to run such an emergency. 5. In order for Killabakh RFS to get more resourcing on the ground fire captain requested member of the public including myself to call in 000 calls even though we weren't present at our homes. Fire control were not responding to Killabakh RFS requests. About half a dozen members of the public were asked to make the 000 calls. 6. Communications at the shed from the captain to and from the units and fire control were extremely difficult, nothing seemed to work. 7. There was no power or water back up at the fire shed although council could have facilitated this. 8. I received an sms at 2.39pm 12/11/19 to my phone alerting me that a fire was 'north west of wingham area' this was the only warning sent to people in the fire path that destroyed my home.
<p>ANY SUGGESTIONS OR THOUGHTS OF WHAT COULD BE DONE BETTER BY YOURSELF OR ANY SERVICES IF THE SITUATION WAS TO ARISE AGAIN?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There needs to be better communications via sms and fires near me. Fires near me were at least three hours behind, so this will not work with the public. 2. Fire shed needs emergency back up power so that water pumping, showers and re-charging of equipment can occur. 3. In emergency fires career fire co-ordinators need to take over to allow local volunteer knowledge to stay out on the fire front. 4. Refresher training programs should be mandatory and frequent for RFS volunteers. RFS should use non active members as support staff during the emergencies. 5. Improving the local knowledge of roadside numbering system as locals generally only know the name of the owners etc. 6. For the post disaster period – nobody from any organisation contacted me to formally advise my house was destroyed or escort me to the site. I had to contact the fire captain to enquire if I had permission to access the site.

H. NOTIFICATION

HOW WERE YOU INFORMED/ALERTED OF THE NATURE, EXTENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE FIRES? (SMS, MEDIA, INTERNET etc.)	I was helping at the fire shed so received information via RFS systems.
WAS THIS SUCCESSFUL?	As stated above in suggestions.

I. COMPLETED

COMPLETED BY: DATE: SIGNATURE:	[REDACTED] 7/2/2020
POLICE: DATE: SIGNATURE:	[REDACTED] 7/2/2020